

### REMARKS

The Examiner has divided the claims into three groups:

- Group I: Claims 1-5, drawn to purified oligonucleotides;
- Group II: Claim 7, drawn to methods for preparing an oligonucleotide;
- Group III: Claims 8-13, drawn to methods for detecting HCV nucleic acids.

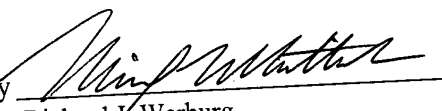
Applicants hereby elect Group III (Claims 1-18), without traverse. By the present submission, Applicants have amended claim 1 to fall within Group III, amended claim 8 to depend from claim 1, and cancelled claims 2-7.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should any matters remain outstanding, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the address and telephone number listed below so that they may be resolved without the need for additional action and response thereto.

Respectfully submitted,

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